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ABSTRACT

The Texas Education Code, in which bilingual education is specifically required to contain six components, translates into a systems model for practical application. The model contains these steps and processes: (1) informal instruction using the student's language and cultural values and experience in the home; (2) thorough skill assessment, diagnosis of language dominance, degree of bilingualism, and level of English language proficiency; (3) teacher determination of the skills to be learned, matching the child's developmental stages with the instructional objectives and prescribed curriculum; (4) grouping according to language proficiency (generally, Spanish-dominant, bilingual, and English-dominant), with subgrouping when appropriate; and (5) formal instruction by grouping. Other strategies used in this approach include individualized instruction, peer tutoring, contracting, team-teaching, and flexible scheduling. All of these strategies have been found to facilitate learning and provide for individual differences in a bilingual setting. Consideration of children's learning styles, home-school cooperation, the inclusion of learning activities relating to specific teaching objectives, and careful record-keeping and evaluation are also seen as important program elements. (MSE)

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Transitional Systems Management in Bilingual Education

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A comprehensive philosophy for bilingual education generally stems from study in the fields of education, psychology, sociology and linguistics. In seeking to teach the total child, a philosophy for instruction needs to draw from those complementary aspects found in various theoretical fields rather than relenting to a single source to build a framework theory for teaching that can best suit the learning needs of children of limited English proficiency.

Children of limited English proficiency (LEP children) have the same basic needs as other children. They have the same individual needs to grow into healthy, creative, intelligent, and productive adults. Educational needs of LEP children are also the same as any other group of children. They need to have appropriate instructional decisions made for them. They need to be recognized for their own uniqueness and individuality. They need teachers that will facilitate their learning and development. In particular, LEP children need teachers who are sensitive, highly skilled and who understand the basic theories of how children learn. They need the kind of teacher who will help them make appropriate decisions which will assist them in their quest for self-actualization.

To meet the needs of these children it seems philosophically appropriate to draw from the practical aspects of behaviorist psychology as well as from cognitive psychology which views learning in terms of perception, acquisition, organization, and storage of knowledge. It seems appropriate also that one must not ignore the work of Piaget whose theories imply that the instructional decisions one makes for children must be based on the child's individual needs and must be matched to his dominant language. Findings in sociological research which stress the role of culture, values, and beliefs in the development of the self-concept must

also be considered for this implies that the child's school and teachers need to recognize and respect the child's home, parents, experiences, and language. Perhaps the single most synthesized contribution to be drawn from these various theories is the conclusion that learning will proceed from the known to the unknown, drawing primarily from the strenght of the child's own experiences and language.

Any systems model for bilingual education must be organized in accordance with state adopted guidelines and be in compliance with existing law. The Texas Education Code defines bilingual education in Chapter 21, Subchapter L, stipulating that programs must have the following six components:

I. The basic concepts initiating the child into the school environment are taught in the language he brings from home.

II. Language development is provided in the child's dominant language.

III. Language development is provided in the child's second language.

IV. Subject matter and concepts are taught in the child's dominant language.

V. Subject matter and concepts are taught in the second language of the child.

VI. Specific attention is given to develop in the child a positive identity with his cultural heritage, self-assurance, and confidence.

Orientation to the classroom code of behavior and patterns of social interaction with his peers are developed by drawing from the child's resources of experiences and concepts and language which he has already learned in his home environment.

The sequential development of the four language skills, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing, is continued in the language for which the child has already learned the sound system, structure, and vocabulary. This is exactly the same approach which has been used in the past. The only difference is the use of the dominant language of the child whose first language is not English. With this one change the child begins developing the skills with the use of his first language without having to wait until he learns his second language.

By utilizing second language teaching methodology, i.e., teaching the listening and speaking skills by use of oral language instructional techniques prior to teaching the reading and writing skills, the child immediately begins to learn a

second language. For the English-speaking child, this instruction is in the language of the other linguistic group involved in the program and, of course, English is taught to the child who comes from a non-English speaking environment. Unique about this component of the program is the fact that the child does not have to re-learn language skills. He has only to transfer these skills learned in his first language to the second language.

Content areas which are considered to be critical to the intellectual and emotional development of the child and to his success in the school environment are initially taught through the use of the child's first language, thereby permitting and encouraging the child to enter immediately into the classroom activities, drawing from all his previous experiences as a basis for developing new ideas and concepts.

Since no language can be taught in a vacuum, content areas are also taught in the second language, providing the vocabulary and concepts which are needed for communication while the second language is being learned. Initially the number of ideas and concepts are necessarily few due to the limitations imposed by the amount of language the child controls. The teaching techniques are audiolingual in order to insure the development of listening and speaking skills. As the child's second language ability develops, more and more content is included and the other skills, reading and writing, are incorporated using both structured and unstructured teaching techniques.

The historical contributions and cultural characteristics identified with the people of both languages involved are an integral part of the program. Both the conflict and the confluence of the two cultures are presented in the social development of the state and nation in order to create an understanding and appreciation of each in a positive rather than negative sense.

By providing the opportunities for successful participation and achievement, the child is encouraged to develop acceptance of himself and of others through social interaction.

Adaptation of the Texas Code to the classroom can be illustrated in a practical manner via the systems model on the following page. This system was established upon an eclectic, theoretical and philosophical base drawn from those psychological and other considerations previously delineated. The system contains the following program material steps and processess:

STEP 1 - INFORMAL INSTRUCTION

The model recognizes the informal instruction which the child gets in the home. It is important that the child's language and culture be valued. The new learning is highly dependent on the child's previous experiences.

STEP 2 - ASSESSMENT

In order to begin the educational process, the child's skills must be assessed and he must undergo a thorough diagnosis to determine the stage of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development. In a bilingual program, it becomes of paramount importance that Spanish-speaking children be tested for language dominance and degree of bilingualism and proficiency in the English language.

STEP 3 - PRESCRIBING

Using observation, questions, home interviews, language dominance tests, and checklists, the teacher determines what knowledge, experiences, and language skills a child posesses. Likewise the teacher will identify those skills which the child can acquire within the educational program to be provided. Here it is important that the developmental stages of the child be matched to the instructional objectives within the scope and sequence of the curriculum. Once these determinations are made, the teacher can proceed.

STEP 4 - LANGUAGE GROUPING

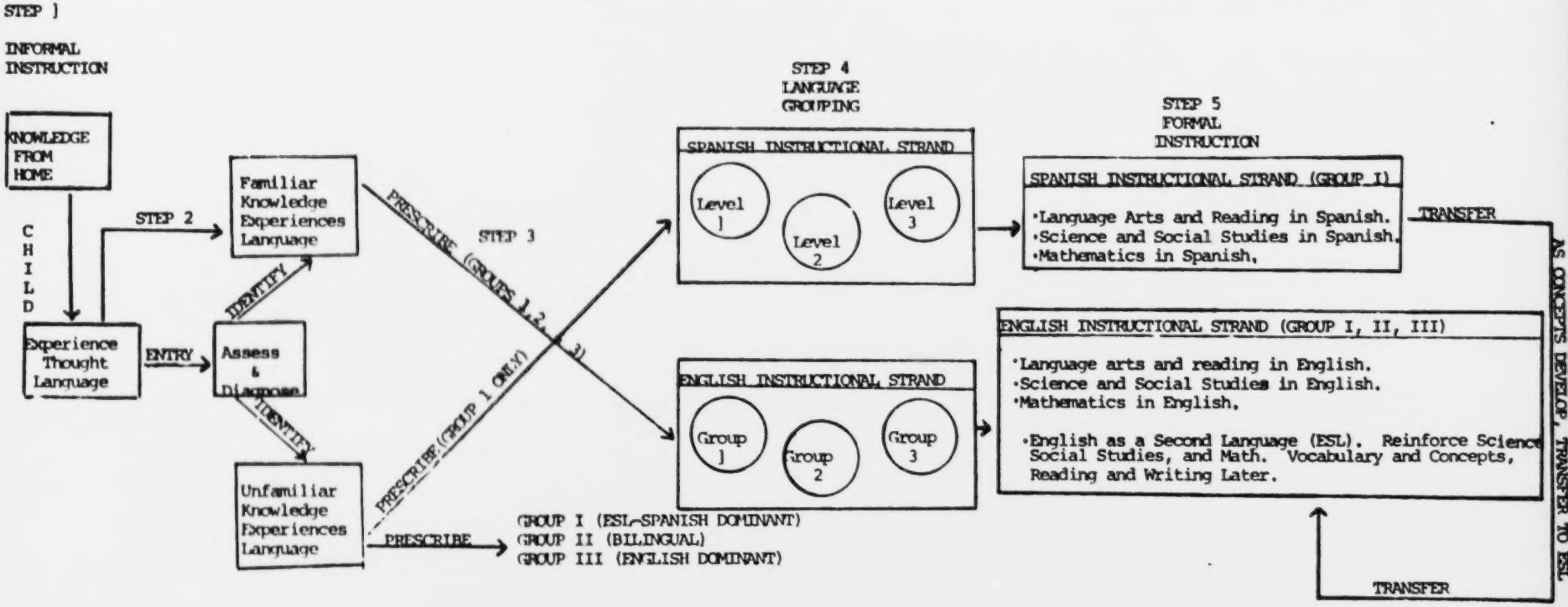
After careful diagnosis, the teacher must group children according to language proficiency. The groups are generally categorized as follows: Group 1 - Spanish Dominant; Group 2 - Bilingual; and Group 3 - English Dominant.

The Group 1 students can be sub-grouped into Level's 1, 2, and 3 depending on the degree of English skills acquired. Level 1 has little or no English skills. Level 2 has minimal skills and Level 3 has a functional vocabulary but not sufficient to succeed in the all-English curriculum.

STEP 5 - FORMAL INSTRUCTION

Children in Group 1 will be assigned to the Spanish Instructional Strand for Language Arts, Reading and other subject matter instruction required. They will also participate in the English Oral Language Instructional Strand. The content for English Instruction will come from the storehouse of familiar concepts and experiences which the child has internalized in his native language (Spanish). As the child acquires more concepts and skills from formal instruction in the Spanish Instructional Strand, the teacher will transfer these skills and reinforce the

A BILINGUAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS MODEL



One-Way Transitional Bilingual Education Model.

concepts in English. It is possible to increase the level of English instruction as the child gains cognitive skills in his own language.

Research has indicated that all children learn languages best when they are young and can develop a dual system of cognition. It is hoped that within the elementary school years Mexican-American children will become proficient in English in order to continue in the regular English school program. If a child builds proficiency in English, he may be grouped with children in the regular English strand, and ultimately he can exit the Spanish Strand.

Group 2 and 3 children may be given instruction in English only as shown in the illustration. However, it is recommended that an opportunity be given for interaction with children in the ESL component in order to enable the children to learn and grow together.

Other strategies important to the implementation of a bilingual program are individualized instruction, peer tutoring, contracting, team-teaching and flexible scheduling. These strategies have been found to facilitate learning and provide for the multitude of individual differences in a bilingual setting. Care should also be taken to examine learning styles of children in order to build from the strengths they possess.

Home-school cooperation is another important consideration in bilingual education. Knowledge of child-rearing practices and home values can strengthen the teacher's effectiveness in obtaining classroom discipline and student responsibility. Home cooperation can also give the teacher insights into the kinds of motivation and incentive techniques that work best with Spanish-speaking Mexican American children.

It is also important that teachers provide a variety of activities which relate to their specific teaching objectives. The following are types of activities that can be effectively used for the development of skills as well as for reinforcement and remediation:

-Observation
-Question and Answer
-Drills
-Memorization and Recitation
-Dramatization (Silent and Verbal)
-Drawing
-Songs, Music, Movement
-Finger Plays
-Poems, Chants, Riddles
-Stories
-Field Trips
-Games
-Photographs

-Food Preparation, experiments
-Short Talks (Share and Tell) "The Most Important Thing That Happened to Me Today"
-Puppets
-Telephone Games
-Looking at pictures, magazines, storybooks
-Radio and TV Simulations
-Comics
-Roleplaying
-Rap Sessions about feelings and problems
-Using Idioms and Slang
-Interviews

Record-keeping and student evaluation are a significant consideration in the consideration in the management of any classroom. It is important in bilingual education that tests be criterion-referenced and given frequently. Student contracts and folders should be consistently checked in order to be current with student progress and/or learning difficulties.

Materials and equipment must be suitable and plentiful enough to account for cultural and linguistic differences within the classroom and most important of all, the bilingual teacher must be skilled, knowledgeable and willing to accept the immense responsibility of managing the instruction of the bilingual child.